

1 **WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

2 1. A method of producing a real-time video stream from stored MPEG
3 encoded video clips, the MPEG encoded video clips being contained in data storage of a
4 video server, the method comprising:

5 reading segments of the MPEG encoded video clips from the data storage, the
6 segments of the MPEG encoded video clips being decoded by respective first and second
7 decoders in a decoder pair, the first decoder decoding at least a portion of a first MPEG
8 encoded video clip and the second decoder decoding at least a portion of a second MPEG
9 encoded video clip, the real-time video stream being obtained by operating a video switch
10 to switch between a video output of the first decoder and a video output of the second
11 decoder to select a specified In-point frame in the second MPEG encoded video clip that
12 is selectable as any MPEG frame type at any location in an MPEG group of pictures
13 (GOP) structure.

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15 2. The method as claimed in claim 1, which includes operating the decoders
16 and the video switch in response to control commands from the video server.

17
18 3. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the control commands include
19 streaming commands used to control the In-point of the second MPEG encoded video
20 clip included in the real-time video stream.

1 4. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the control commands include
2 configuration commands used by the video server for determining a configuration of the
3 decoders and to set up configuration parameters for the decoders.

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5 5. The method as claimed in claim 2, which further includes transmitting
6 asynchronous edit requests between the video server and the decoders.

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8 6. The method as claimed in claim 2, which further includes transmitting
9 asynchronous status reports between the decoders and the video server.

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11 7. The method as claimed in claim 1, which includes the decoders requesting
12 and obtaining MPEG encoded data from the video server.

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14 8. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the video server maintains
15 decoder data buffers of the decoders in a substantially full condition.

16
17 9. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the decoders detect loss of data
18 during transmission from the video server to the decoder array.

19
20 10. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the video switch is operated to
21 switch between a video output of the first decoder and a video output of the second
22 decoder to a specified In-point frame in the second MPEG encoded video clip to switch
23 between a video output of the first decoder and a video output of the second decoder to

1 select a specified In-point frame in the second MPEG encoded video clip at the
2 occurrence of a specified time code.
3

4 11. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each decoder obtains MPEG
5 encoded data from the video server by sending a request for data including a decoder data
6 buffer free space value and an offset value indicating any MPEG encoded data previously
7 received from the video server, and the video server responds to the request for data by
8 sending MPEG encoded data sufficient to substantially fill the data buffer free space
9 taking into consideration MPEG encoded data previously sent but not yet received by
10 said each decoder when said each decoder sent the request for data.
11

12 12. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each decoder receives MPEG
13 encoded data from the video server by receiving data packets, each of the data packets
14 including a respective offset value indicating an amount of data transmitted in at least one
15 previous data packet to said each decoder, and said each decoder computes an expected
16 offset value from the offset value in a received data packet and compares the expected
17 offset value to an offset value in a subsequently received data packet to recognize that at
18 least one data packet has been lost in transmission from the video server to said each
19 decoder.
20

21 13. The method as claimed in claim 1, which includes the video server
22 preparing for the switching from the video output from the first decoder to the video
23 output from the second decoder by fetching MPEG encoded data of the second MPEG

1 encoded video clip from disk storage to buffer memory in the video server, and later
2 initiating a stream of MPEG encoded data to the second decoder in response to a request
3 from the second decoder.
4

5 14. The method as claimed in claim 1, which includes the video server
6 preparing for the switching from the video output from the first decoder to the video
7 output from the second decoder by initiating a stream of MPEG encoded data from the
8 second MPEG encoded video clip in the video server, and wherein the decoders have
9 sufficient buffer memory so that streaming of MPEG encoded data of the first MPEG
10 encoded video clip from the video server to the first decoder is not overlapped with
11 streaming of MPEG encoded data of the second MPEG encoded video clip from the
12 video server to the second decoder.
13

14 15. The method as claimed in claim 1, which includes the video server
15 preparing for the switching from the video output from the first decoder to the video
16 output from the second decoder by initiating a stream of MPEG encoded data from the
17 second MPEG encoded video clip in the video server, and wherein the video server
18 fetches MPEG encoded data from storage of the video server beginning with an I frame
19 referenced by the In-point frame and preceding the In-point frame in decode order when
20 the specified In-point frame is not an I-frame.
21

22
23 16. The method as claimed in claim 1, which includes synchronizing the video
24 server and the decoders to a common house clock signal and switching between a video

1 output of the first decoder and a video output of the second decoder to a specified In-
2 point frame in the second MPEG encoded video clip at the occurrence of a specified time
3 code in the house clock signal.

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5
6 17. A method of producing a real-time video stream from stored MPEG-2
7 encoded video clips, the MPEG-2 encoded video clips being contained in data storage of
8 a video server, the method comprising:

9 reading segments of the MPEG-2 encoded video clips from the data storage, the
10 segments of the MPEG-2 encoded video clips being decoding by respective first and
11 second decoders in a decoder pair, the first decoder decoding at least a portion of a first
12 MPEG-2 encoded video clip and the second decoder decoding at least a portion of a
13 second MPEG-2 encoded video clip, the real-time video stream being obtained by
14 operating a video switch to switch between a video output of the first decoder and a video
15 output of the second decoder at an occurrence of a specified time code to select a
16 specified In-point frame in the second MPEG-2 encoded video clip that is selectable as
17 any MPEG-2 frame type at any location in an MPEG-2 group of pictures (GOP)
18 structure,

19 which includes operating the decoders and the video switch in response to control
20 commands from the video server, the control commands include streaming commands
21 used to control the In-point of the second MPEG-2 encoded video clip included in the
22 real-time video stream, and

1 which includes the decoders requesting and obtaining MPEG-2 encoded data from
2 the video server.

3
4 18. The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the control commands
5 include configuration commands used by the video server for determining a configuration
6 of the decoders and to set up configuration parameters for the decoders.

7
8 19. The method as claimed in claim 17, which further includes transmitting
9 asynchronous edit requests between the video server and the decoders, and transmitting
10 asynchronous status reports between the decoders and the video server.

11
12 20. The method as claimed in claim 17, which includes each decoder
13 obtaining MPEG-2 encoded data from the video server by sending a request for data
14 including a decoder data buffer free space value and an offset value indicating MPEG-2
15 encoded data previously received from the video server, and the video server responds to
16 the request for data by sending MPEG-2 encoded data sufficient to substantially fill the
17 data buffer free space taking into consideration MPEG-2 encoded data previously sent
18 but not yet received by said each decoder when said each decoder sent the request for
19 data.

20
21 21. The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein each decoder receives
22 MPEG-2 encoded data from the video server by receiving data packets, each of the data
23 packets including a respective offset value indicating an amount of data transmitted in at

1 least one previous data packet to said each decoder, and said each decoder computes an
2 expected offset value from the offset value in a received data packet and compares the
3 expected offset value to an offset value in a subsequently received data packet to
4 recognize that at least one data packet has been lost in transmission from the video server
5 to said each decoder.

6
7 22. The method as claimed in claim 17, which includes the video server
8 preparing for the switching from the video output from the first decoder to the video
9 output from the second decoder by fetching MPEG-2 encoded data of the second MPEG-
10 2 encoded video clip from disk storage to buffer memory in the video server, and later
11 initiating a stream of MPEG-2 encoded data to the second decoder in response to a
12 request from the second decoder.

13
14 23. The method as claimed in claim 17, which includes the video server
15 preparing for the switching from the video output from the first decoder to the video
16 output from the second decoder by initiating a stream of MPEG-2 encoded data from the
17 second MPEG-2 encoded video clip in the video server, and wherein the decoders have
18 sufficient buffer memory so that streaming of MPEG-2 encoded data from the video
19 server to the first decoder is not overlapped with streaming of MPEG-2 encoded data
20 from the video server to the second decoder.

21
22 24. The method as claimed in claim 17, which includes the video server
23 preparing for the switching from the video output from the first decoder to the video

1 output from the second decoder by initiating a stream of MPEG-2 encoded data from the
2 second MPEG-2 encoded video clip in the video server, and wherein the video server
3 fetches MPEG-2 encoded data from storage of the video server beginning with an I frame
4 referenced by the In-point frame and preceding the In-point frame in decode order when
5 the specified In-point frame is not an I-frame.

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7
8 25. The method as claimed in claim 17, which includes synchronizing the
9 video server and the decoders to a common house clock signal.

10
11
12 26. A system for producing multiple concurrent real-time video streams from
13 stored MPEG encoded video clips, said system comprising:

14 a video server including data storage containing the MPEG encoded video clips;
15 and

16 at least one MPEG decoder array linked to the video server for receiving control
17 commands and data from the video server, the decoder array including multiple decoder
18 pairs, each decoder pair having a video switch for switching from a video output of one
19 decoder in said each decoder pair to a video output of the other decoder of said each
20 decoder pair at an occurrence of a specified time code, the video server and the decoder
21 array being programmed for switching each video switch for selecting a specified In-
22 point frame that is selectable as any MPEG frame type at any location in an MPEG group
23 of pictures (GOP) structure,

1 wherein the video server and the decoder array are programmed for the video
2 server to control the decoder array by sending control commands from the video server to
3 the decoder array, and the video server and the decoder array are programmed for each
4 decoder to request and obtain MPEG-encoded data from the video server.
5

6 27. The system as claimed in claim 26, which includes at least one respective
7 dedicated data link between each decoder in the decoder array and the video server for
8 transmission of MPEG encoded data from the video server to the decoder, and at least
9 one dedicated data link between the video server and the decoder array for transmission
10 of the control commands.
11

12 28. The system as claimed in claim 27, which further includes at least one
13 additional dedicated data link between the video server and the decoder array for
14 transmission of asynchronous status reports and edit requests.
15

16 29. The system as claimed in claim 26, wherein the control commands include
17 configuration commands to allow the video server to determine a configuration of the
18 decoder array and to set up configuration parameters, and streaming commands to control
19 the In-points of the MPEG encoded video clips included in each of the multiple
20 concurrent real-time video streams.
21

22 30. The system as claimed in claim 26, wherein the video server and the
23 decoder array are further programmed for the video server to receive asynchronous status

1 reports of significant events from the decoder array; and for the video server to send edit
2 commands to the decoder array for editing content of the multiple concurrent real-time
3 video streams.

4
5 31. The system as claimed in claim 26, wherein the video server is
6 programmed to maintain decoder data buffers of the decoders in a substantially full
7 condition, and the decoders are programmed to detect loss of data during transmission
8 from the video server to the decoder array.

9
10 32. The system as claimed in claim 26, wherein each decoder is programmed
11 to obtain MPEG encoded data from video server by sending a request for data including a
12 decoder data buffer free space value and an offset value indicating any MPEG encoded
13 data previously received from the video server, and the video server is programmed to
14 respond to the request by sending MPEG encoded data sufficient to substantially fill the
15 data buffer free space taking into consideration MPEG encoded data previously sent but
16 not yet received by said each decoder when said each decoder sent the request for data.

17
18 33. The system as claimed in claim 26, wherein each decoder is programmed
19 to receive MPEG encoded data from the video server by receiving data packets each
20 including a respective offset value indicating an amount of data transmitted in at least one
21 previous data packet to said each decoder, and said each decoder is programmed to
22 compute an expected offset value from the offset value in a received data packet and to
23 compare the expected offset value to an offset value in a subsequently received data

1 packet to recognize that at least one data packet has been lost in transmission from the
2 video server to said each decoder.

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4
5 34. A system for producing multiple concurrent real-time video streams from
6 MPEG encoded video clips, said system comprising:

7 a video server for storing the MPEG encoded video clips, and
8 at least one MPEG decoder array coupled to the video server for producing the
9 multiple concurrent real-time video streams from the MPEG encoded video clips stored
10 in the video server;

11 wherein the video server includes cached disk storage for storing the MPEG
12 encoded video clips, multiple data mover computers coupled to the cached disk storage
13 for streaming segments of the MPEG encoded video clips from the cached disk storage to
14 the MPEG decoder array, and a controller server computer coupled to the data mover
15 computers for controlling the data mover computers; and

16 wherein the decoder array includes a respective decoder pair and a respective
17 video switch for each of the multiple concurrent real-time video streams, the video switch
18 selecting a video output from either one of the decoders in the decoder pair for
19 production of said each of the multiple concurrent real-time video streams by switching
20 from the video output from one of the decoders in the decoder pair to a specified In-point
21 frame in the video output from the other of the decoders in the decoder pair, wherein the
22 In-point frame is selectable as any frame and any frame type in a group of pictures (GOP)
23 structure of the MPEG encoded video, and the decoders in the decoder pair are coupled to

1 a respective one of the data mover computers for receiving segments of the MPEG
2 encoded video clips for the production of said each of the multiple concurrent real-time
3 video streams.

4
5 35. The system as claimed in claim 34, wherein the decoder array includes a
6 decoder controller coupled to the decoders and to the video switches for controlling the
7 decoders and the video switches, the decoder controller being coupled to at least one of
8 the data mover computers for receiving control commands for the production of the
9 multiple concurrent real-time video streams.

10
11 36. The system as claimed in claim 35, wherein the control commands include
12 configuration commands to allow the video server to determine a configuration of the
13 decoder array and to set up configuration parameters, streaming commands to control the
14 In-points of the MPEG encoded video clips included in each of the multiple concurrent
15 real-time video streams, asynchronous status reports of significant events from the
16 decoder array; and edit commands to allow the decoders in the decoder array to be
17 controlled for editing content of the multiple concurrent real-time video streams.

18
19 37. The system as claimed in claim 34, further including an operator control
20 station coupled to the controller server for transmitting a play list and edit commands
21 from an operator to the controller server for controlling and editing content of the
22 multiple concurrent video streams.

1 38. The system as claimed in claim 34, which further includes a house clock
2 generator coupled to the data mover computers and the decoders for scheduling and
3 switching to the specified In-point frames when the house clock generator provides
4 respective specified time code values.
5

6 39. The system as claimed in claim 34, wherein the respective data mover
7 computer for each decoder pair is programmed to prepare for switching from the video
8 output from one of the decoders in the decoder pair to a specified In-point frame in the
9 video output from the other of the decoders in the decoder pair by fetching MPEG
10 encoded data for the other of the decoders in the pair from the cached disk storage to
11 buffer memory in the respective data mover computer in response to a request from the
12 controller server, and later initiating a stream of MPEG encoded data to the other of the
13 decoders in the decoder pair in response to a request from the other of the decoders in the
14 decoder pair.
15

16 40. The system as claimed in claim 34, wherein the respective data mover
17 computer for each decoder pair is programmed to prepare for switching from the video
18 output from one of the decoders in the decoder pair to a specified In-point frame in the
19 video output from the other of the decoders in the decoder pair by initiating a stream of
20 MPEG encoded data to the other of the decoders in the decoder pair, and wherein the
21 decoders have sufficient buffer memory so that streaming of MPEG encoded data from
22 the respective data mover computer to said one of the decoders in the decoder pair is not

1 overlapped with streaming of MPEG encoded data from the respective data mover
2 computer to the other of the decoders in the decoder pair.
3

4 41. The system as claimed in claim 34, wherein the respective data mover
5 computer for each decoder pair is programmed to prepare for switching from the video
6 output from one of the decoders in the decoder pair to a specified In-point frame in the
7 video output from the other of the decoders in the decoder pair by initiating a stream of
8 MPEG encoded data to the other of the decoders in the decoder pair, and wherein the
9 respective data mover computer for said each decoder pair is programmed to fetch MPEG
10 encoded data from storage beginning with any I frame referenced by the In-point frame
11 and preceding the In-point frame in decode order when the specified In-point frame is not
12 an I-frame.
13

14 42. The system as claimed in claim 34, wherein each decoder is programmed
15 to obtain MPEG encoded data from the respective data mover computer by sending a
16 request for data including a decoder data buffer free space value and an offset value
17 indicating any MPEG encoded data previously received from the respective data mover
18 computer, and the respective data mover computer is programmed to respond to the
19 request by sending MPEG encoded data sufficient to substantially fill the data buffer free
20 space taking into consideration MPEG encoded data previously sent but not yet received
21 by said each decoder when said each decoder sent the request for data.
22

1 43. The system as claimed in claim 34, wherein each decoder is programmed
2 to receive MPEG encoded data from the respective data mover computer by receiving
3 data packets each including a respective offset value indicating an amount of data
4 transmitted in at least one previous data packet to said each decoder, and said each
5 decoder is programmed to compute an expected offset value from the offset value in a
6 received data packet and to compare the expected offset value from an offset value in a
7 subsequently received data packet to recognize that at least one data packet has been lost
8 in transmission from the respective data mover computer to said each decoder.

10 44. The system as claimed in claim 34, which includes multiple decoder
11 arrays, each of the multiple decoder arrays being coupled to a respective one of the data
12 mover computers for producing multiple concurrent real-time video streams from MPEG
13 encoded data streamed from said respective one of the data mover computers.

15 45. A system for producing multiple concurrent real-time video streams from
16 MPEG-2 encoded video clips, said system comprising:

17 a video server for storing the MPEG-2 encoded video clips, and

18 at least one MPEG-2 decoder array coupled to the video server for producing the
19 multiple concurrent real-time video streams from segments of the MPEG-2 encoded
20 video clips stored in the video server;

21 an operator control station coupled to the video server for transmitting a play list
22 and edit commands from an operator to the video server for controlling and editing
23 content of the multiple concurrent real-time video streams; and

1 wherein the video server includes cached disk storage for storing the MPEG-2
2 encoded video clips, multiple data mover computers coupled to the cached disk storage
3 for streaming the segments of the MPEG-2 encoded video clips from the cached disk
4 storage to the MPEG-2 decoder array, and a controller server computer coupled to the
5 data mover computers for controlling the data mover computers in response to the play
6 list and edit commands from the operator control station; and

7 wherein the decoder array includes a respective decoder pair and a respective
8 video switch for each of the multiple concurrent real-time video streams, the video switch
9 selecting a video output from either one of the decoders in the decoder pair for
10 production of said each of the multiple concurrent real-time video streams by switching
11 from the video output from one of the decoders in the decoder pair to a specified In-point
12 frame in the video output from the other of the decoders in the decoder pair, wherein the
13 In-point frame is selectable as any frame and any frame type in a group of pictures (GOP)
14 structure of the MPEG-2 encoded video, the decoders in the decoder pair being coupled
15 to a respective one of the data mover computers for receiving segments of the MPEG-2
16 encoded video clips for the production of said each of the multiple concurrent real-time
17 video streams, and the decoder array further includes a decoder controller coupled to the
18 decoders and the video switches for controlling the decoders and the video switches, the
19 decoder controller being coupled to at least one of the data mover computers for
20 receiving control commands for the production of the multiple concurrent real-time video
21 streams, wherein the control commands include configuration commands to allow the
22 video server to determine a configuration of the decoder array and to set up configuration
23 parameters, streaming commands to control the In-points of the MPEG-2 video clips

1 included in each of the multiple concurrent real-time video streams, asynchronous status
2 reports of significant events from the decoder array; and edit commands to allow the
3 decoders in the decoder array to be controlled for editing content of the multiple
4 concurrent real-time video streams; and

5 wherein the respective data mover computer for each decoder pair is programmed
6 to prepare for switching from the video output from one of the decoders in the decoder
7 pair to a specified In-point frame in the video output from the other of the decoders in the
8 decoder pair by initiating a stream of MPEG-2 encoded data from the respective data
9 mover computer to the other of the decoders in the decoder pair in response to a request
10 from the other of the decoders in the decoder pair; and

11 wherein the system further includes a house clock generator coupled to the video
12 server and the MPEG-2 decoder array for switching to the specified In-point frames when
13 the house clock generator provides respective specified time code values.

14
15 46. The system as claimed in claim 45, wherein the respective data mover
16 computer for each decoder pair is also programmed to prepare for switching from the
17 video output from one of the decoders in the decoder pair to a specified In-point frame in
18 the video output from the other of the decoders in the decoder pair by fetching MPEG-2
19 encoded data for the other of the decoders in the pair from the cached disk storage to
20 buffer memory in the respective data mover computer in response to a request from the
21 controller server.

22

1 47. The system as claimed in claim 45, wherein the decoders have sufficient
2 buffer memory so that and streaming of MPEG-2 encoded data from the respective data
3 mover computer to said one of the decoders in the decoder pair is not overlapped with
4 streaming of MPEG-2 encoded data from the respective data mover computer to the other
5 of the decoders in the decoder pair.

6
7 48. The system as claimed in claim 45, wherein the respective data mover
8 computer for said each decoder pair is programmed to begin fetching of the MPEG-2
9 encoded data from any I frame referenced by the In-point frame and preceding the In-
10 point frame in decode order when the specified In-point frame is not an I-frame.

11
12 49. The system as claimed in claim 45, wherein each decoder is programmed
13 to obtain MPEG-2 encoded data from the respective data mover computer by sending a
14 request for data including a decoder data buffer free space value and an offset value
15 indicating any MPEG-2 encoded data previously received from the respective data mover
16 computer, and the respective data mover computer is programmed to respond to the
17 request by sending MPEG-2 encoded data sufficient to substantially fill the data buffer
18 free space taking into consideration MPEG-2 encoded data previously sent but not yet
19 received by said each decoder when said each decoder sent the request for data.

20
21 50. The system as claimed in claim 45, wherein each decoder is programmed
22 to receive MPEG-2 encoded data from the respective data mover computer by receiving
23 data packets each including a respective offset value indicating an amount of data

1 transmitted in at least one previous data packet to said each decoder, and said each
2 decoder is programmed to compute an expected offset value from the offset value in a
3 received data packet and to compare the expected offset value from an offset value in a
4 subsequently received data packet to recognize that at least one data packet has been lost
5 in transmission from the respective data mover computer to said each decoder.

6

7 51. The system as claimed in claim 45, which includes multiple decoder
8 arrays, each of the multiple decoder arrays being coupled to a respective one of the data
9 mover computers for producing multiple concurrent real-time video streams from MPEG-
10 2 encoded data streamed from said respective one of the data mover computers.

11